



# PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RECOGNITION DAY

## 29TH ANNUAL AWARDS CEREMONY

**MAY 4, 2022**

*Honoring Our People with a Heart for KC  
...Our Local Public Servants*

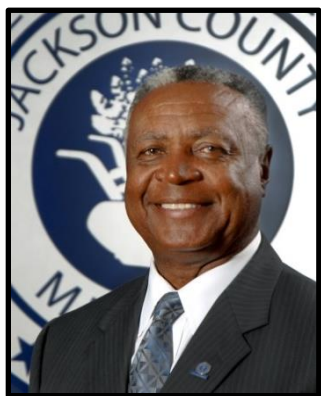




**The Honorable Quinton Lucas**  
***Mayor, Kansas City, Missouri***



Even during an exceptionally challenging year, the Kansas City government workforce has continued its dedication to keeping our city running. Your hard work, talent, and love for our community is the reason why Kansas City continues to be a wonderful place for all our residents. We thank you for your service and commitment in ensuring that Kansas City continues to move forward, recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, and into a brighter future.



**The Honorable Frank White, Jr.**  
***Jackson County Executive***



Today, Jackson County stands in appreciation of our Associates who have served our residents with unwavering pride, perseverance and passion. Their positive mindset has allowed the County to maintain its ability to operate amid such challenging times and for that, I cannot be more grateful. Our Associates are our most valuable asset and I am proud to celebrate those who are being recognized today for their outstanding accomplishments. Receive your award with honor, knowing that you have made a difference in our community. Congratulations and thank you for your service to build a better, more equitable Jackson County!



**Regina D Heise**  
***Chair, Federal Executive Board***  
***Regional Director, Midwest Network***  
***U.S. Department of Commerce***



It is an honor to join you today to recognize public servants at the City, County, and Federal levels for their outstanding contributions to our community and our country. By its nature, public service attracts a special kind of individual, the kind of individual that has an intense commitment to making the community and country we live in a better place and putting service to society before self. We have certainly seen this time and time again, especially over the course of the last couple of years when government employees have had time to navigate enormous challenges with no playbook and have put others before self, time and time again. We are so fortunate that the women and men being honored today have chosen to dedicate their lives to serving others. Congratulations to today's award recipients and thank you for your service.

# **2022 Public Employees Recognition Day Awards Ceremony**

***PRESIDING:*** Linda Kerr-Davis, Regional Administrator  
Social Security Administration – Region VII  
Chair, Public Employees Recognition Day Awards Ceremony

***PRESENTATION OF COLORS:*** Jackson County Sheriff's Department Color Guard

***NATIONAL ANTHEM:*** Toi Lee  
United States Government, Federal Aviation Administration

***WELCOME:*** The Honorable Quinton Lucas  
Mayor, Kansas City, Missouri

The Honorable Frank White, Jr.  
Jackson County Executive

Regina D. Heise, Dept of Commerce- International Trade Commission  
Chair, Federal Executive Board

## **Award Presentations**

***CITY AWARDS:*** *presented by* The Honorable Quinton Lucas  
Mayor, Kansas City, Missouri

***COUNTY AWARDS:*** *presented by* The Honorable Frank White, Jr.  
Jackson County Executive

***FEDERAL AWARDS:*** *presented by* Regina D. Heise, Dept of Commerce-  
Chair, Federal Executive Board

***AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL:*** Toi Lee  
United States Government, Federal Aviation Administration

***CLOSING REMARKS:*** Linda Kerr-Davis, Regional Administrator  
Social Security Administration – Region VII  
Chair, Public Employees Recognition Day Awards Ceremony



**CITY OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**  
**DISTINGUISHED ADMINISTRATIVE/PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AWARD**



**Danae Niemetz**  
***Senior Administrative Assistant***  
***Finance Department***  
***City of Kansas City, Missouri***

Danae Niemetz has stepped up to help administer and improve the Public Improvements Advisory (PIAC) process. With Danae's support, we have been able to make great strides in the PIAC process for timely application processing and follow up, improving the public, committee, and City Council experience. The process is critical to allowing residents to have a voice in how Kansas City's capital budget is spent.

This year, PIAC applications went electronic for the first time ever. Danae did an excellent job pulling applications together while making sure paper applications didn't get overlooked. She scheduled all PIAC update meetings, which can be very challenging and require a lot of coordination between PIAC representatives, City Council members, and department leadership. Danae attended all update meetings, ensuring everything was set up and organized to allow for a smooth meeting. Danae has also been the Teams meeting facilitator and has done an outstanding job to ensure that meetings run smoothly and are handled professionally.

In addition to preparation for meetings, there are also many administrative tasks that follow once projects are in place. Danae provides exceptional service to ensure questions are answered from the public, PIAC committee, or City Council members regarding projects. She is prompt to respond and contacts the appropriate departments for comment.

Danae has graciously filled the need for exceptional administrative service, quickly learning the process and bringing new ideas for improvement where needed. Taking on this responsibility has meant Danae has had to be flexible with her schedule, sometimes having to work evenings. These responsibilities and achievements have been in addition to the many other improvements she has helped bring to the Administrative Division of the Finance Department. She is a valued member of our team and is deserving of this recognition.

**CITY OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**  
**DISTINGUISHED CLERICAL SERVICE AWARD**



**Kelli Marshall**  
***Customer Service Specialist***  
***Municipal***  
***City of Kansas City, Missouri***

Kelli Marshall is an integral member of the Municipal Court Resource Center, which handles all incoming court communications, including phone calls, records requests, emails, faxes, and mail. In a short time, Kelli has stepped up to become a trainer and is the “go to” person in this division. The people she has assisted describe her as patient, kind, knowledgeable and delivering “A++++ public service”.

Kelli promoted into her current position September 13, 2021, and the first day, received her first written kudos from an extremely satisfied paralegal she assisted. “You took the time to help, and you were very pleasant,” the paralegal wrote in her email. “You must be a great asset to the City of Kansas City Missouri.”

Only 90 days later, the Resource Center's call volume tripled when the court started receiving all court calls directly. Previously the 311 Action Center received the court calls first and only passed escalated calls to the Municipal Court Resource Center. As a result, the Resource Center had to hire new call takers and fill other vacancies due to retirements and promotions. Kelli patiently trained three new employees while consistently handling more than 100 calls per day and processing court emails, records requests, and documents for the Missouri Department of Revenue to update driving records based on court actions. When the rules will not allow the caller get the continuance or record they requested, Kelli nicely explains the policies and gives legal information without drifting into giving legal advice. Before promoting to the Resource Center, Kelli provided excellent customer service as a part-time representative and cashier in the Court's Violations Bureau and took on the task of running the court's on-site virtual hearing window where she helped people without computer or phone access attend virtual hearings during the COVID-19 pandemic. Kelli is responsive, helpful, and genuinely cares about all citizens of Kansas City.

**CITY OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**  
**DISTINGUISHED COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD**



**David Mullin**  
***Maintenance Mechanic***  
***Convention & Entertainment Facilities***  
***City of Kansas City, Missouri***

David Mullin has served the community in two parallel paths. Dedicating his time, energy and knowledge to his career with the City of Kansas City, MO for 37 years, while also serving the community as an Ordained Pastor. Between his employment as a public servant and spending his personal time contributing to the wellbeing and spiritual growth of the community, David is an outstanding contributor to the community.

David started with the City in October 1985 working as a Security Guard at Kemper Arena and then took a position with the Department of Conventions and Entertainment. While working in Security, he began to work with the locks and keys for the facilities. He recognized if he learned the skill of a locksmith, he could save the City a lot of time and money by not having to contract out. He started with a few small events and grew his skill over time. The City offered David a promotion to Maintenance Mechanic and he became the locksmith for the Convention and Entertainment Facilities. His personal investment in being a locksmith has paid off for the City by saving the City a huge investment in hiring outside locksmiths over many years and events.

While not working as a locksmith, David's personal drive is serving the community as an Ordained Pastor with his church in Sugar Creek, MO. In his words "Whether I am performing my job here at the Convention Center or while working with the church, my drive is to perform in such a way that I illustrate a Christ likeness. I want to perform to the best of my abilities because that is what Christ would do and that is what Christ expects out of me." David started preaching in the summer of 1979 and became an Ordained Pastor in 2000. David's lifetime of service to the community spans both work life and personal life equally. The City and the community benefit from David's contributions professionally and spiritually. As a locksmith and spiritual leader, he has found the key to co-creating with the universe.

## CITY OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI DISTINGUISHED DIVERSITY AWARD



**Shawn Kirkwood**  
*Administrative Officer  
Neighborhood and Community Service  
City of Kansas City, Missouri*

Shawn Kirkwood has served as an employee in Neighborhood Services for 14 years. During this time, he has led efforts to increase diversity and inclusion in programs managed by the Department. Shawn has worked diligently to improve the lives of Kansas City residents through programs such as Love Thy Neighbor and the Municipal Court Fund.

In 2021-22, Shawn took on the unexpected challenge of rebuilding the Neighborhood Tourist Development Fund grant program to promote cultural, social, ethnic, and recreational activities in Kansas City. Due to a catastrophic crash in the portal website used to manage the program, along with a sudden staff shortage, the program was in danger of missing the deadline for awarding funds this year, with no clear direction for future years. Shawn worked tirelessly to assist in rebuilding the grant management system and in making up for staff shortages by scheduling work sessions between grant applicants and the NTDF Board, creating visual aids for Board members, drafting contracts for applicant awards, and processing award payments.

Shawn's extraordinary efforts in rebuilding the NTDF process has furthered Kansas City's commitment to supporting diverse cultural and ethnic activities. Shawn's exemplary efforts with NTDF has helped ensure the viability of this program for future years.

## CITY OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP AWARD



**LaToya Black**  
*Human Resources Manager  
Human Resources Department  
City of Kansas City, Missouri*

The City of Kansas City, Missouri made the decision to switch to SharePoint's platform for its intranet and LaToya was tasked with the build-out of the Human Resources department's site. While she could have just transferred information from the prior intranet pages, she took this as an opportunity to transform the department's site by making it user-friendly, engaging, and visually interesting, highlighting each division within the department and creating an up-to-date document library.

LaToya challenged her co-workers in each division to assist her in the build by focusing on the end result and how the new site would benefit City employees. Her messaging was, "I would appreciate you helping me, to help you, to help us to help our employees." LaToya met with each division to preview their pages and provided suggestions for content and page layout. She also trained her co-workers on how to update their division's pages.

Because of LaToya's leadership, HR's site was up on SharePoint before the City's main MyKC page. LaToya's work was recognized as an example for others to follow and the City modeled its page after her work. John Hildebrand the City's Webmaster stated, "She set the bar high! Microsoft said on a call this week that they'd like to use this HR site as an example for other clients on what you can do with an intranet site. That's good praise."

As a result of her work, City employees can more easily access information about all things HR, including benefits, retirement planning, wellness classes, professional development, and HR policies and forms. Her leadership in training her colleagues to update their division pages also means that when employees access the site, they are receiving the most current information.

LaToya is a positive role model who encourages those around her to want to succeed and her focus is City employees. LaToya's ability to think outside the box to address challenges and her dedication to making sure it is done right is commendable.



**CITY OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**  
**DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SAFETY - AWARD**



**Tim Gridley**

***PHSIV Operations Manager***

***Health Department***

***Communicable Disease Prevention Division***

***City of Kansas City, Missouri***

The Health Department's (HD) Communicable Disease Prevention and Public Health Preparedness Division (CDP/PHP) plays an important role in protecting public safety by monitoring, investigating and responding to communicable diseases and other public health threats.

During HD's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Tim's expertise in planning, critical thinking and organizational management was instrumental for his role as the operations section chief. Tim's leadership during the pandemic was nothing new as he often responds to emergency activations of the City's Emergency Operations Center and represents the HD. As the full-time 24-7 Duty Officer, he exceeds expectations and triages all after-hours HD calls throughout the year. He has done this for many years and works tirelessly to assure that all calls are received, documented and handled quickly and completely.

Tim has organized and managed hundreds of thousands of dollars of HD assets to assist during emergencies. During the City's opening of the Bartle Hall warming center, his management and organization of purchased shelter supplies enabled the site to open very quickly and protect the unhoused population during a dangerously cold extended period. Likewise, Tim's resource management allowed the HD to supply the public with over 2 million face masks during COVID-19.

Tim and staff recently stood up a 21-day COVID-19 testing site that ran for 10 hours daily and included a holiday weekend. This was planned and implemented very quickly and helped provide additional community access to testing resources. Rather than delegating oversight, he was present daily and made sure that all issues were quickly resolved. He consistently goes out of his way to take assignments and balance the extremely heavy workload, especially during COVID-19 where many staff worked numerous hours beyond the typical work week for two years. Tim's a valuable resource not only to CDP/PHP and HD but to the community in which he serves.

**CITY OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI  
DISTINGUISHED TEAM AWARD**



**CIVIL RIGHTS & EQUAL OPPORTUNITY DEPARTMENT**

The Civil Rights & Equal Opportunity Department (CREO KC) was originally established as the Human Relations Department in 1968 to address civil rights, social equity and to provide redress for citizen complaints. The purpose and responsibilities of CREO KC to administer and enforce antidiscrimination laws of the city, state and federal government (including Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964) are codified under City Code Ch. 38. CREO KC expanded to include business enterprise certification and workforce opportunities in 1996 and construction employment program(s) to facilitate opportunities in the construction industry for historically excluded marketplace participants.

As such, CREO KC is also responsible for creating equal opportunity in contracting, employment and training programs within the City of Kansas City, Missouri including the social equity business enterprise programs both locally and federally including the: Small Local Business Enterprise program (SLBE), Small Business Enterprise program (SBE), Minority Business Enterprise program (MBE), Woman Business Enterprise program (WBE), Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program (DBE), and the Airport Concessionaire Business Enterprise program (ACDBE).

The Civil Rights & Equal Opportunity Department is organized as follows:

- Economic Equity & Inclusion Division (responsible for the administration of contract inclusion and business enterprise certification)
- Civil Rights Division (responsible for the antidiscrimination provisions of local, state and federal law)
- Contract & Labor Standards Division (responsible for the administration and enforcement of local, state and federal wage and hour laws and labor standards)

Deemed an essential function under local pandemic policies, the CREO KC team worked through countless barriers due to the pandemic to assist workers and business owners. Between the divisions, the CREO KC team facilitated wage restitution, public accommodation complaint settlement, and employment discrimination conciliation agreements totaling more than \$200,000 in 2021 and enforced more than \$100,000,000 in contracts for small minority and woman owned businesses.

**CITY OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI  
DISTINGUISHED TECHNICAL SERVICE AWARD**



CITY SERVICES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

**City Planning and Development**  
***The Compass KC Work Team***  
***City of Kansas City, Missouri***

The City's Compass KC Work Team makes outstanding contributions to keep Compass KC, the city's online project review and permitting system, fully functional amid consistent challenges of the past two years. This team involves a cross section of City Planning and Development staff along with representatives from the City's Information Technology Department. Amid pandemic challenges, the City Planning and Development department continued to meet the full development needs of our City because of our robust Compass KC system that allowed the entire department to work safely in the field or from their homes.

The Compass KC Work Team meets weekly to ensure things are running smoothly both internally (for city staff users) and externally (for customers) on the Compass KC platform. This group works with the software product vendor, Tyler Technologies, to implement updates, troubleshoot any issues that arise, and provide feedback to identify issues and opportunities for system improvements. The Compass KC Work Team has lead several updates to the system and regularly coordinates throughout the department to ensure city staff and customers understand the details of each update.

This group's efforts to manage Compass KC is only a part of each of their duties. Each member of the team uses their unique expertise to execute a multitude of other vital services for the City of Kansas City, Missouri.

**Compass KC Work Team Members:**

- Josh Benda
- Jared Clements
- Greg Franzen
- Christopher Hughey
- Jeff Lee
- Stacey Lowe
- Najma Muhammad
- Zach Nelson
- John Pajor
- Joshua Parton
- Heath Perkins

**CITY OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**  
**DISTINGUISHED TRADE/CRAFT SERVICE AWARD**



**Rena Goodwin**  
*Equipment Operator*  
*Public Works Department*  
*City of Kansas City, Missouri*

Rena Goodwin has served the City of Kansas City in the Public Works Signs & Markings Division for over 28 years. Currently, she holds the title of Equipment Operator [Crafts Person]. She is committed to her work that includes the coordination and fabrication of street signage and special event signage for the entire City of Kansas City.

Over the years of working in the fabrication shop, she's developed a valuable skill set and become an experienced sign fabricator. Using this experience, she provides cross-training opportunities for coworkers who may be interested in learning this type of craft. She is a true professional who models professionalism on a daily basis.

In addition to her primary duties, Rena oversees and coordinates the emergency snow command operation for the Public Works Department. She facilitates snow removal through verbal communication and applicable use of technology. She assists in overseeing miles of streets and must confirm when the snow routes are completed based upon a tracking system. She also has the responsibility of managing the location of all the snow equipment and recording the maintenance/service for those pieces of equipment. She demonstrates leadership and effective communication skills continuously and is a valuable asset to the success of this program.

Rena is a true professional and within her day to day activities she demonstrates a positive attitude, dependability, reliability, resourcefulness, decisiveness, job proficiency, leadership, effective communication skills and organization skills. Rena Goodwin is just a plain ol' hard worker. The City is grateful for her dedication and is honored to recognize her professional conduct and performance.



**CITY OF KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI  
DISTINGUISHED VALOR AWARD**



**Benjamin (Ben) Boucher**  
***Fire Fighter***  
***Fire Department***  
***City of Kansas City, Missouri***

On January 9, 2021, at 1002 a regular alarm at 3720 Askew came in with reports of 5 children trapped. Upon arrival, with smoke showing from a one-story wood frame residence, the crew was met by two adults who confirmed there were children still inside. The adults believed the children were in the basement. FF Boucher, acting as captain on Truck 5, initiated a primary search and quickly found 2 children upstairs. He took them into a bathroom which had the closest outside window. He advised the two other members of Truck 5 to bring a ladder to the Bravo side and look for him in the window. Then FF Boucher removed his facepiece and alternately supplied both children with fresh air until the ladder was in place. Once the ladder was in place, he handed both children out to the other firefighters to be taken to safety.

In all, three children were rescued safely from the house and transported to the hospital. FF Boucher went above and beyond the call of duty to rescue these two children and selflessly risked his own safety to provide air from his self-contained breathing apparatus until they could be removed from the structure.

FF Boucher has only just started to work out of class as captain and the fact that he used his training to take decisive action and provide clear instruction to the remainder of his crew while knowing these children were in a life-threatening environment makes his actions even more impressive. He acted as a skilled and seasoned veteran of the fire service. Firefighter Boucher carries himself humbly and he would probably say everyone on scene were "just doing their jobs". However, Firefighter Boucher's actions that day were selfless and heroic.

**JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI**  
**DISTINGUISHED ADMINISTRATIVE/PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AWARD**



**ASHLEY BURKE**

***EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
JACKSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT***

Over the past two years, Ashley Burke has shown exceptional leadership on projects that are critical to the county.

In addition to her regular responsibilities as Executive Assistant to the County Administrator, Ashley has single handedly managed an indigent cremation program for county residents with no means of providing for loved ones' burials. Nearly 200 individuals are handled by this program every year and in 2020 those numbers increased by nearly 20 percent due to COVID-19 in our community.

She must deal with distraught residents who have lost family members or humanely handle the remains of residents who do not have next of kin. This is a thankless job that must be done by the county, and Ashley handles that work with compassion and understanding that can make a difficult interaction with the county more acceptable.

In addition, to the indigent cremation responsibilities, Ashley also managed a nearly \$3 million allocation of federal COVID-19 relief funds to address food insecurity needs of Jackson County residents. This work, which began in 2020 and is only now wrapping up in 2022, involved in developing a request for proposal and selecting more than 30 agencies that could distribute critical funds for food assistance to help thousands of Jackson County residents in need. As a result of her efforts, thousands of Jackson County residents did not go hungry during the pandemic.

Lastly, Ashley also took the lead on the relocation of 106 households from the Heart Village Mobile Home Park which will be the site of the new Jackson County Detention Center. Currently, it is the largest residential relocation project occurring in the United States. When the county acquired the property, none of the residents were on a lease over three months in duration and many were facing eviction for non-payment of rent.

Ashley led the effort on behalf of the county to ensure that all residents were relocated into better housing conditions. She spent countless hours on the phone with residents developing individual housing plans, answering hundreds of questions and trying to understand the individual needs of the residents. She is now spending as much as three days a week onsite at the trailer park personally directing the relocation efforts. As a result of her efforts, 17 residents are now living in their own single-family homes and most others are in much improved housing situations.

Ashley has shown exceptional leadership in her daily work and has willingly stepped up to handle projects that need special attention. She is the best representation of what it means to be a Jackson County associate.

## JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI DISTINGUISHED CLERICAL SERVICE AWARD



**STACEY MACK**  
***ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT***  
***CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT***  
***JACKSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT***

Stacey Mack is the crucial right hand of the Corrections director. She juggles multiple stakeholders, contends with competing priorities that can change by the hour and always approaches her interactions with the public with patience and compassion.

She manages queries from inmates on the department's internal administrative request system and monitors email communications from the public to department's central email account. Stacey is often the first to become aware of a serious safety concern, or an information gap that has caused great concern to an inmate's family. She is the tip of the spear in efforts to handle customer service with safety and security.

Corrections has worked diligently to improve its relationship with the community it serves through good customer service, integrity, transparency and professionalism. Stacey embodies these principals in every interaction with the public and with her colleagues. No matter the situation, she dives in with enthusiasm and a positive, can-do attitude.

Stacey is a tremendous asset to the collective morale of the administration team. This has been especially crucial during the pandemic when associates and stakeholders approached this environment with hesitation and uncertainty. Her persistent optimism helped encourage the team and alleviate the anxieties of the family members of inmates during this incredibly difficult time.

Stacey began her service to Jackson County in 2011 as a Clerk in the Assessment Department. She joined the detention center in late 2015 where she serves as an Administrative Assistant.

## JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI DISTINGUISHED COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD



**LEON BROOKS**  
**LEAD SUPPORT SERVICES**  
**SPECIALIST**  
**CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT**

**THOMAS WEBB**  
**SUPPORT SERVICES TECHNICIAN**  
**CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT**

As eviction rates rose during the pandemic, homeless encampments began to become more numerous. To help those in need, a pair of Corrections Department associates stepped

up.

Leon Brooks, Lead Support Services Specialist and Thomas Webb, Support Services Technician donated to one of the encampments close to downtown Kansas City. On many occasions they handed out water to the residents on their way in to work.

Giving back to the community is nothing new for Thomas and Leon. They regularly participate in local food drives and are active with other charitable organizations. The two would never promote themselves for doing something charitable. Handing out water to the homeless isn't the story of their community service.

The story of their community service is that citizens and associates of Jackson County saw the generosity and were so affected that they told others.

One associate reported that "this is why I enjoy working at Jackson County so much, because this is the kind of people who work here."

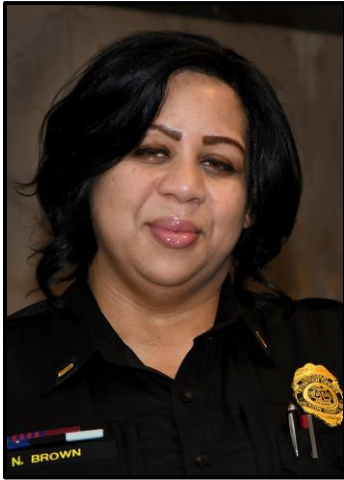
A supervisor wrote to the Director of the Detention Center, "You have a fantastic staff, it is a pleasure to be associated with them." Another wrote, "This is a great example of our amazing people doing extraordinary, compassionate, service to others in our community."

Their impact on others reaffirms that Jackson County is a great place to work and how the act lifted the spirits of the organization.

Support Services Supervisor, Craig Mosher said, "Doing something for others makes people feel good. It strengthens their personal values and promotes social awareness. It encourages others to do the same. Mr. Brooks and Mr. Webb's simple selfless act of donating water to a homeless encampment helped the residents, but it left an indelible mark on many others. It inspired the organization and reaffirmed that Public Service is the right career."



## JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI DISTINGUISHED DIVERSITY AWARD



**NATASHA BROWN**  
**LIEUTENANT**  
**SHERIFF'S OFFICE**  
**JACKSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

Lieutenant Natasha Brown's assignment to the Jackson County Detention Center provided her with the opportunity to positively enhance the atmosphere of inclusion within the Jackson County Detention Center (JCDC).

Natasha seized this opportunity and works tirelessly to advance all employees of all backgrounds and groups in one of the most diverse facilities in the region. She does an excellent job at welcoming new staff during employee orientation. She also spends time to get to know the new employees and build a professional rapport to advocate for them and any needs they might have.

One example of her efforts, which might seem minor at first, but it sets an incredible tone of acceptance for the Corrections' staff, is the time and effort she puts into learning how to correctly pronounce a new employee's name. The diverse collection of backgrounds, cultures and nationalities represented within the JCDC creates a bevy of names for her to learn. Some names include accents, spellings and even sounds that are definitely foreign to Natasha, a small-town Oklahoma native. She works hard to accurately pronounce every name as she presents them a certificate of training completion. Learning someone's name is a basic issue, but her commitment to putting in sincere effort is often above and beyond what others are willing to try and goes a tremendous way toward proving to staff that they are welcome just as they are.

Another example of the value of Lieutenant Brown's commitment to fostering diversity comes from a recent Correctional Officer Academy class. The Academy class had several new officers originally from various nations. As the Academy progressed and the officers spent long hours training, learning and testing alongside each other, some friction began to develop along cultural lines. Lieutenant Brown took time to address the delicate situation in a respectful manner which allowed for the officers to build a greater understanding of their diverse backgrounds. Without this skilled intervention, the organization would likely have lost multiple valuable employees. Protecting the reputation of the Detention Center as a welcoming place for staff of different backgrounds is vital as the facility benefits significantly from retaining staff from diverse communities.

Natasha is also a vital part of the annual training process, teaching required refresher courses on equal access and treatment, diverse lifestyles and protecting inmates' rights. The JCDC must provide fair and equal treatment to all people detained in the facility and she advocates strongly to provide staff knowledge to maintain an understanding of gender, orientation and lifestyle.

## JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP AWARD



**LEA HENDERSON**  
**CAPTAIN**  
***CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT***  
***JACKSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT***

Corrections Captain Lea Henderson has proven to be a strong leader and advocate for her staff. She is methodical and patient in her mentoring of officers, so they are prepared to advance their careers to the next level.

Lea has 30 years of correctional and law enforcement experience with nine years of service at the Jackson County Detention Center. She began her career in corrections as a correctional officer with the Missouri Department of Corrections. Throughout her career she has demonstrated a commitment to the highest level of excellence in her job duties and public service.

Captain Henderson was a lieutenant in the Regional Correctional Center which housed high need city inmates in a novel operation that required building from the ground up. She was hand selected by the administration for this responsibility based on her skills, organization and superior judgment in crisis situations.

As a teacher, she coaches her staff with direct support. She is preparing her lieutenants for next level management. When her shift must call administration in crisis incidents, she has the lieutenants do it, but she's right there coaching them through the opportunity so they can practice with her support, so when they need to do it without her, they are ready.

She has an exceptional record for the advancement of her subordinates as she celebrates and recognizes the pursuit of professional certification and promotions. She was also one of the first women of rank to be in the Corrections Emergency Response Unit, where she is active today. This unit is the tip of the spear in crisis response in the detention center and her leadership to this group and the training she provides is crucial to ensuring the members have the skills to do their critical jobs safely.

Captain Henderson currently works with the Jackson County courts, population control, inmate records office, and transportation unit, to respond to or resolve concerns and to ensure public safety during inmate transports. She also has the responsibility of assisting with the management of the overtime budget on her assigned shift at the Jackson County Detention Center.

Lea is always the first to step up and volunteer to assist with community projects and to collaborate with various committees and projects to improve the safety and security of staff, inmates and the community.

## JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI DISTINGUISHED LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



**ONGIE DOUGLAS**  
***SPECIAL POPULATION SERVICES RECREATIONAL THERAPIST***  
***PARKS + REC DEPARTMENT***  
***JACKSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT***

Ongie Douglas has dedicated her professional career to the Jackson County Parks + Rec Special Population Services Division, serving individuals with developmental disabilities as a Recreational Therapist for 39 years.

She supports athletes and their families with opportunities, which respect their choices, enhance their health and self-esteem, encourage independence and assist their inclusion in all aspects of the community.

Ongie started her career with Jackson County in 1983 as an associate assisting other Special Population Services staff members. In 1985, she began her coaching career overseeing several athletic and wellness programs, allowing the developmentally disabled to participate in team and individual sports and activities that would enhance their lives.

Ongie also went back to school at this time and earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology, with an emphasis in the study of Autism. She continues to serve many individuals in her programs that are diagnosed with Autism.

Ongie's lifetime of commitment to the developmentally disabled continues as she coaches bowling, basketball, softball, walking, track and field, tennis, pickleball and gardening. She also assists with several other activities offered by the Special Population Services Division.

Each year, Ongie coaches teams and individuals who participate in Special Olympics. Her athletes have competed on every level of Special Olympics, including the World Games. She works directly with each participant to set goals and helps them attain those goals on an ongoing basis. Even when an athlete wants to give up, she is there cheering them on and supporting them in their endeavors. This past February, two of her teams brought home the gold while competing at the Special Olympics Basketball Tournament.

Ongie is more than a Coach; she is committed personally and professionally to each athlete in her program. During the past two years many of the athletes could not attend practices due to the risk of exposure to COVID-19. Ongie recognized the need to stay in touch with those individuals by phone and made sure they were doing okay. She assembled Sport Equipment Packs and dropped them off at athletes' homes. These packs included exercise bands, small weights, exercise tracking sheets, an exercise ball and illustrated instructions for each exercise she wanted them to complete. Each week, she refreshed the packs with new exercise instructions and needed equipment, helping to keep her athletes in shape, mentally and physically.

## JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SAFETY AWARD



**KAITLYN BOGACZ**  
*RANGER*  
*PARKS + REC DEPARTMENT*  
*JACKSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT*

The lives of three boys were saved due to the quick action of Parks + Rec Ranger Kaitlyn Bogacz.

On August 3, 2021, Ranger Bogacz was on patrol when she came across three young boys swimming in Longview Lake near the boat ramp. Two of which were struggling to stay afloat. She instantly recognized the danger the children were in and immediately jumped into action to get the boys to safety.

Kaitlyn grabbed the first struggling boy out of the water, he was conscious and breathing. She instructed the second boy, which turned out to be an older brother, to take him to safety at the top of the boat ramp.

She then turned to pull the third boy from the water. He was unresponsive to her actions. Seeing that the child's face had turned a pale white color and his lips had turned blue, she immediately called for Emergency Medical Services and began lifesaving measures.

Kaitlyn administered back blows and abdominal compressions to the boy to help expel water from his airways. Due to her efforts, after a short period of time, the boy became more responsive and audible.

Emergency Medical Services arrived and transported the children to the hospital for further medical care.

The boys are all alive today because of the heroic actions of Ranger Bogacz. She recognized the emergency and took the appropriate actions, without hesitation. Kaitlyn's performance that day exemplifies her personal commitment to public safety and serves as an inspiration for both the public and her fellow Jackson County Park Rangers.

Kaitlyn has been with Jackson County Parks + Rec since October of 2019.



## JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI DISTINGUISHED TEAM AWARD

### Human Resources Staff- Human Resources Department



#### TEAM MEMBERS:

**GINA CAMPBELL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR;**  
**MICHELLE CHRISMAN, DIRECTOR;**  
**KRISTEN FORD, ADMINISTRATOR;**  
**TRACY JORDAN, SPECIALIST; MARIA**  
**LEATHERS, OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR;**  
**JILL MILLER, WELLNESS**  
**COORDINATOR; SONYA REED,**  
**ADMINISTRATOR; RANDOLPH REYES,**  
**ADMINISTRATOR; AQUITA RIDDLE,**  
**ANALYST; NICKOLA TAYLOR,**  
**SPECIALIST**

Jackson County's Human Resources (HR) Department has worked diligently to keep associates safe and informed during the unprecedented Corona Virus Public Health Crisis. These professionals had to quickly learn how to follow and implement official guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for our county associate's health and well-being.

Working closely with the Jackson County Health Department and Executive Office, Jackson County's HR Department took every precaution when developing safety measures for our county associates. Policies for COVID-19 leave, travel restrictions, safety guidelines and remote work policies, had to be created. Vaccine information and locations were disseminated. Information was fluid and ever-changing, necessitating frequent and ongoing policy updates as new and vital information was presented. During this extraordinary time, the HR Department became the associate's primary resource in understanding how to move forward in the workplace.

The HR staff was consistently outstanding at communicating with department coordinators throughout the COVID-19 testing process. The team listened to feedback from each department and incorporated recommendations on many occasions. The team was always available to take calls and answer questions. If they did not know the answer to a particular question, they tracked down the correct information and provided direction back to the department as soon as they could. No question went unanswered.

The team coordinated technology needs, equipment and supplies for the County's COVID-19 testing sites. Hardware, software and wi-fi connections were provided and supported by the HR Department and the Information Technology Department. Throughout the testing process, needs were quickly addressed, creating an efficient testing environment, with no downtime. When supplies ran low, the team always had back up items to provide on short notice.

The Jackson County Human Resources Department has had to do difficult work under difficult circumstances. Their leadership through this pandemic goes unchallenged. Human Resources Director, Michelle Chrisman, and her team of professionals are wearing more hats than ever before, performing tasks they hadn't previously been expected to do on behalf of county associates.

## JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI DISTINGUISHED TECHNICAL AWARD



**DANNY BARNES**  
**SERGEANT**  
**SHERIFF'S OFFICE**  
**JACKSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

Since the merge of the Detention Center into the Sheriff's Office, Sergeant Danny Barnes has been integral in building bridges, combining technologies and bringing the agency up to date with state-of-the-art technology.

He created a proposal and acquired upgrades for the radio infrastructure utilized by the Sheriff's Office, Public Works and Parks + Rec, to improve communication between deputies, detention staff, park rangers and maintenance crews. This project includes all new radios, a fiber connection to the microwave tower mounted atop city hall, and a new satellite dispatch panel at the Detention Center.

Sergeant Barnes wrote a request for proposals for body worn cameras and upgraded video server equipment. He then reviewed the proposals and is in the process of rolling out the cameras to deputies.

Danny led the team that installed and implemented the new Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) based inmate movement tracking system at the Detention Center. He researched and acquired new software to be used by investigators and detectives at the Sheriff's Office, both in the field and at the Detention Center.

He also put together the request for proposals to replace the antiquated resource management and computer aided dispatch systems at the Sheriff's Office with a modern system which included a robust jail management system. He then put together a multidisciplinary evaluation committee, which included line staff, front-line supervisors, and command staff from every division of the Sheriff's Office to review the proposals and evaluate the product demonstrations. Once completed, Danny presented the findings to the Jackson County Purchasing Department.

Sergeant Barnes was a key technician and panel member in the department's first presentation to a national audience in February 2021 for the American Correctional Association. It was his engineering that resulted in a multi-camera angle, professionally lit and presented training seminar, the department's first opportunity to do so as an agency at this level.

Everything he does for the Jackson County Detention Center is next level, never satisfied with the status quo or how things have always been done. He is a credit to the uniform, a trust-worthy and committed colleague, and true servant of the people.

**JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI**  
**DISTINGUISHED TRADE/CRAFT SERVICE AWARD**



**ROBERT HERNANDEZ**

***FACILITIES MANAGEMENT DIVISION LEAD TRADESMAN/ELECTRICIAN  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT  
JACKSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT***

Electrician Robert Hernandez recently implemented an energy-savings project by exchanging the outdated lighting fixtures in Jackson County buildings with new, modern, energy-saving fixtures, ballasts and LED bulbs. While finding savings in energy costs, this increased the lighting levels throughout the facilities to allow for a bright yet calming experience within the facilities.

His focus on others' safety and security was insurmountable when he drove initiatives such as increasing the lighting in the parking garage, adding controls for electrical components and fixtures in the public and tenant spaces, along with adding fresh updates to areas that felt overlooked. These improvements are not only aesthetically pleasing, but they are also focused on members of our community and their well-being.

Robert serves as one of Jackson County's Facilities Management Division (FMD) Trades Leads and is an exemplary electrician within the department. He has been a member of the IBEW Local 124 for 37 years and with Jackson County for the past five years, working on various projects and maintenance throughout the 18 Facilities Management Division's locations in Jackson County.

Robert accepted the position of FMD Tradesman Lead and has been an integral part of the team, guiding the Facilities Management Division electricians, carpenters, operating engineers, painters and plumbers on multiple projects, overseeing all aspects of each. He is a reliable point of contact for both the trade and management teams.

## JACKSON COUNTY, MISSOURI DISTINGUISHED VALOR AWARD



**JEROME ATTY**  
***DEPUTY***  
***SHERIFF'S OFFICE***  
***JACKSON COUNTY GOVERNMENT***

On July 1, 2021, Sheriff's Deputy Jerome Atty was assigned at the Jackson County Detention Center when he was notified that a high-profile murder trial was in progress and a credible security violation was reported. He was reassigned to the Independence Courthouse for additional support to the court.

While the inmate was returning to the holding cell from the court room, he broke free from his leg restraint and ran from his attorney and the security detail assigned to him. All assigned security gave chase and called over the radio for assistance.

Deputy Atty immediately gave chase from his assigned location and could see other officers searching for the escapee. Using his knowledge of the area, physical prowess and speed, he single handedly trapped the assailant in an area where he was able, at great personal risk, to apprehend the convicted felon.

His quick actions, training and abilities removed a threat to public safety from the county without harm to himself, the convicted felon, other officers or citizens.



**UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT**  
**DISTINGUISHED ADMINISTRATIVE/PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AWARD**



***Amy Pankau***

***Management & Program Analyst – Database Developer  
U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services  
National Records Center  
United States Federal Government***

Amy Pankau, a Management & Program Analyst at the National Records Center (NRC), single-handedly maintains 18 locally developed databases, dramatically improved 15 of them, and developed several new databases.

She took the initiative to learn the complex SQL language and protocols so she could modify and move eligible databases from Access and SharePoint backends to SQL Server and utilized SQL Server Migration Assistant (SSMA) and the SQL Server Import and Export Wizard to migrate tables and data. She used SQL Server Management Studio (SSMS) to create and modify databases, tables, and views, add indexes to tables, create primary keys, and implement relationships among tables. Amy created both Data Source Name (DSN) and DSN-less connection to SQL Server to link tables in Access. She optimized performance between the Access database engine and SQL Server and used SQL Server Profiler to analyze events between Access and the SQL Server database to find slow-running queries and capture the series of T-SQL statements produced by the event. She identified issues and implemented modifications to Access queries and record sets to ensure the databases function optimally on the SQL Server. She used T-SQL code to create and modify views, functions, scripts, stored procedures, schemas, and security and provided users with appropriate permissions.

Amy seized on several opportunities to utilize and improve her technical abilities to ensure the NRC operations are functioning efficiently. She has streamlined numerous antiquated and tedious processes which have resulted in significant time savings for the end users, eliminated the typical synchronization errors incurred when multiple users are concurrently using the same databases, and has dramatically reduced manual intervention. Her accomplishments have enabled the NRC to be a more robust, agile, and efficient organization and are even more impressive with the backdrop of personnel shortages.

Her work products provide the critical and immediate information needed to make accurate data-driven decisions that have a direct and consequential impact on current and future NRC operations. She has enriched the work lives of many employees with her creativity, legendary work ethic, ingenuity, and dedication to mission success and is widely recognized as a “Superstar!”

## UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT DISTINGUISHED CLERICAL AWARD



***Kathy McClurken***  
***Administrative Support Assistant***  
***Veterans Integrated Services Network, Station 15***  
***United States Federal Government***

Kathy McClurken serves as the Administrative Support Assistant for the Veterans Integrated Services Network (VISN), Station 15. Since her arrival in June 2018, she has always set the example of the department's core values, and combines both expert leadership and vision to enhance the VISN's capabilities.

Kathy ensured compliance with Records Management by creating an inventory and file plan to ensure proper disposition by records schedule designations and preparing requests as appropriate. This resulted in decrease of files maintenance and space, and saving on paper and copier costs.

She always looks out for fellow employees and ensures those scheduled for conferences are appropriately notified to ensure driving conditions are safe during inclement weather. Due to her advanced augmentation of this process, business continued by providing virtual options for conferences utilizing Microsoft TEAMS. This effort proved vital and increased productivity ten-fold during the COVID pandemic where most employees needed to be sent home for telework.

Kathy learned the Light Electronic Action Framework (LEAF) system to enable its use for VISN 15 processes for in-processing personnel, updating policies and standard operating procedures, files disposition requests, and creation of business cards. This resulted in more efficient tracking of each action and enabled its use to expand to others.

Due to her meticulous record keeping, she was selected to serve as the administrator for several VISN 15 committees, including: Honoring Veterans Board, Lean Steering Board, and Integrated Ethics, where she is responsible for recording of calls, taking attendance, and sharing of updated meeting minutes.

Kathy has worked for the Department of Veterans Affairs since January 2011 and began as a program support assistant for Geriatrics and Extended Care Services at the Marion VA Medical Center, Illinois. Prior to that, she served in the Air Force and continues to maintain that same level of professionalism. She has deployed to Saudi Arabia in support of Operation SOUTHERN WATCH.

Married for over 27 years, her entire family has continued to serve Veterans as volunteers or working for the department. Her hobbies include reading, knitting, crocheting, and she has taken an interest in learning to read and write in Braille.

**UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD**



**Jared Martin**

***Special Agent  
Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency  
United States Federal Government***

A longtime avid outdoorsman and U.S. Army Veteran, Jared Martin is very active in sharing his passion for the outdoors. This has led Jared to join both MO Vets Outdoors and Johnson County Ducks Unlimited.

Jared shares in the mission of helping Veterans and their families through MO Vets Outdoors, focusing on helping with Veteran mental health and suicide prevention through outdoor activities. He does this by way of his involvement in outdoor activities, bringing together Veterans with projects, events, hunts, and fishing events so they can once again feel the comradery and be around like-minded people without judgment. Through MO Vets Outdoors Jared is also able to connect Veterans with benefits and employment opportunities or assistance as needed. Jared takes pleasure in coordinating hunts through the Missouri Department of Conservation and resource managers to obtain appropriate approvals and a positive experience for all hunters.

With Johnson County Ducks Unlimited, Jared works with the local chapter of the much larger Ducks Unlimited organization towards supporting the local conservation, restoration, and management of wetlands and associated habitats for waterfowl. These habitats also benefit other wildlife and people in the community.

Anchored in his passion for the outdoors, Jared strives to effectively and positively impact his community. While volunteering Jared also has a direct and significant impact on Veterans as he opens doors to new relationships and opportunities they may otherwise never come across. His efforts towards attending to the needs of others exemplifies what a public servant does for their community, serving as a role model to others.

## UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT DISTINGUISHED DIVERSITY AWARD



### **Todd Denmark**

***Management Program Analyst  
Department of Homeland Security  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services – District 32  
United States Federal Government***

Todd Denmark is recognized for his exemplary role as the President of the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Kansas City Pride Chapter. Todd was instrumental in garnering interest and support for this chapter, which became the first local chapter in the country in early 2020, following the establishment of the national Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Pride chapter. His efforts have helped USCIS and other DHS employees in the Kansas City area find a more accepting environment to celebrate diversity and inclusion.

By networking with the other USCIS offices in the greater Kansas City metro area, as well as reaching out to other DHS agencies in the area, Todd identified key points of contact who could generate more awareness and interest at their own offices. He arranged for monthly Zoom sessions amongst members and guests, including a Zoom session with Kansas Congresswoman Sharice Davids, which was attended by over 120 virtual people from District 32 and the National Benefits Center. Other Zoom sessions have included a panel discussion with local community leaders, several movie nights with follow-on discussions, and an interactive session with LGBTQ author Ellen Hart.

During the June 2021 Pride month, Todd moderated a community panel discussion on LGBTQ issues with the Mid-America LGBT Chamber of Commerce Board President, City Council President of Westwood, KS, the Chairman of the Pride in Federal Service organization, and a statewide LGBTQ and Human Rights legislative strategist. Through Todd's encouragement and motivation, chapter members have coordinated other team events including a Pride Day march, team happy hour meetings and exercise hikes, and team food-sorting at Harvester's food bank. Over the last 30 months, the Chapter has grown to 45 registered members, plus members from FEMA and the Nebraska Service Center, and more in-person and virtual events are planned in order to maintain momentum and enthusiasm for this important commitment to the workforce.

## UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP AWARD



***Lawrence Murray***  
***Technical Training Manager***  
***Social Security Administration- Region VII***  
***United States Federal Government***

This award recognizes the extraordinary leadership of Lawrence (Larry) Murray throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Larry currently serves as the Technical Training Manager in the Social Security Administration's Mid-America Program Service Center (MAMPSC) located in the Kansas City Region. He provides guidance and support to a training team of 24 instructors, 5 managers, and 2 technical experts who deliver technical training to all MAMPSC new hires across multiple job disciplines.

Prior to March 2020 (pre-COVID-19 pandemic), all MAMPSC training classes were delivered face-to-face in a classroom setting. As we learned more about COVID-19, Larry took the initiative to explore transitioning from the traditional face-to-face training model to a remote learning environment. Larry researched, benchmarked with peers, developed, and implemented a first of its kind hybrid delivery model of technical training to all new MAMPSC employees. While operating under the hybrid training model, Larry identified needs and challenges of trainees, developed solutions, and led his team with confidence during a highly fluid and unprecedented time.

Larry's foresight and strategic thinking prepared his team to for a smooth transition to a 100% virtual training model. His continued leadership, creativity, flexibility, and responsiveness allowed for MAMPSC training to remain on schedule throughout the pandemic, resulting in significant cost savings and sustaining the same successful completion rate and staff retention as pre-pandemic.

Larry's leadership and expertise extended beyond the Kansas City Region, as he was called upon by Mid-Atlantic (Philadelphia Region) and Great Lakes (Chicago Region) Program Service Centers to serve as a subject matter expert for transitioning their training model to a virtual platform. Larry willingly shared best practices, technical guides, and experiences while reinforcing the importance of building strong, cooperative relationships within their teams. This approach also resulted in a successful transition of the Mid-Atlantic and Great Lakes sites to a virtual training environment.

Larry's approach to virtual training continues today and is the model for the future of MAMPSC Technical New Hire Training.



**UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**



**Larry Myers**  
***Executive Officer***  
***U.S. Army Corps of Engineers***  
***United States Federal Government***

Mr. Larry “Essayons” Myers is a Navy veteran with over 40 years of federal service in the US Army Corps of Engineers. Larry currently serves as the Executive Officer for the Kansas City District and has held multiple engineer and project management jobs within the district to include service as the inter-agency services program manager and the military construction manager for Forts Riley, Leavenworth, and Leonard Wood. While serving with the Corps, Larry deployed four times to Iraq serving as a Resident Engineer, Deputy Area Engineer, Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) Engineer, and Strategic Planner. In these roles, he worked for the Department of State in Muthanna Province and served as the on-site Project Manager at the Mosul Dam, a \$530 Million project. For his efforts in 2002, Larry was recognized by the Kansas City Federal Executive Board as the Administrative / Professional Employee of the Year. Additionally, Larry is a recipient of the Bronze de Fleury Medal for significant service to the US Army Engineer Regiment.

In addition to his federal service, Larry is active in the community. With the Society of American Military Engineers, Larry has served as the Post President, Missouri River Region Vice President, and a National Director. He holds the degree of Fellow in the Society and is a Life Member. Larry is also a member of the Society of American Value Engineers, the Society of Government Meeting Planners, Association of the United States Army, Army Engineer Association, and the American Legion. He has served on the board of directors for SafeHome an organization that provides support for survivors of domestic violence.

Larry is well known throughout the US Army Corps of Engineers by his nickname “Essayons.” Essayons is the motto of the US Army Engineer Regiment and represents a “can-do” attitude. Larry was given this moniker by a future Chief of Engineers, the agency head and 3-star general, for Larry’s intrepid work building a new headquarters on Fort Leonard Wood. Anyone who interacts with the Kansas City District has met Larry and knows that he truly exemplifies this motto in word and deed.

**UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**



***Stan Utley***

***Interim Chief, Facilities Management service  
Former Chief, Business Operations Service  
Kansas City VA Medical Center  
United States Federal Government***

Mr. Stan Utley has been an integral part of the Kansas City VA Medical Center (KCVA) for 35 years from January 1995 through his retirement planned for September 2022. Stan Utley served as the Administrative Officer for the Ambulatory (Outpatient) Care Division from 1995-1997 and then as the Administrative Officer for Primary Care, Medicine and Surgery Services from 1997-1999. From 1999-2004 he served as Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff.

From 2004 until 2021 Mr. Utley has served as the KCVA Chief Business Officer and provided executive level leadership over three medical center sections to include the Health Administration Section, Health Information Management Section and Veterans Transportation Service. Under Stan's leadership, the Business Operations Service (BOS) line was constantly lauded for the administrative and scheduling support, medical record and coding efficiencies, and transportation service they provided to veterans, clinical staff and the facility.

In May 2021, Mr. Utley was asked by the Medical Center Director to detail into the Facility Management Service (FMS) Chief position to assist in solving severe staffing shortages and provide executive level oversight of FMS operations. Stan rose to the occasion as always, and immediately began making immense positive changes that immediately improved the work environment and overall FMS operations. Because of Stan Utley's leadership during a multi-day facility power failure, FMS was able to keep the hospital running with minimal impact to patients and staff. This facilitated clinical staff continuing to care for veterans and prevented critical patients from being rescheduled.

Stan Utley has received numerous honors throughout his distinguished Federal service career. He earned multiple military honors serving as a ranger in the U.S. Army and was recognized with several performance awards during his time at the Kansas City VA Medical Center.

Stan epitomizes what it means to be a career federal employee and leader, always being dependable, efficient and completely committed to the VA core values. He truly represents the best characteristics of the KCVA, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the Federal Workforce.

**UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED MILITARY/MILITARY SUPPORT AWARD**



***James Weston***  
***Lead IT Specialist***  
***Manpower Information Systems Support Activity***  
***United States Federal Government***

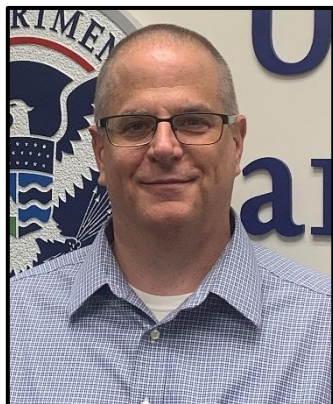
James Weston is the Systems Modifications Branch team lead within the Manpower Information Systems Support Activity. Responsible for mainframe enterprise information system (IS) project production, James Weston supervises the efforts and output of six system analysts. His role is crucial to the quality and performance of the U.S. Marine Corps' enterprise administrative systems, centered on personnel and payment applications. On a daily basis, James Weston provides Functional Change Request (FCR) and System Change Request (SCR) guidance, instruction, and recommendations, gathering input across 12 organizations, and scrutinizing stakeholder requirements against business processes, policy and regulations, and U.S. Marine Corps IS initiatives.

During calendar year 2021, James Weston led his team through the system design lifecycle for 12 SCRs and 27 FCRs, orchestrating development from requirements gathering and design, to testing and implementation. Necessary to conduct detailed testing, James Weston collaborated with each analyst within his team to make certain all system changes, modifications, enhancements, and updates, were comprehensively examined prior to implementation. Furthermore, James Weston developed and reviewed 11 decision logic table (DLT) changes and 27 test output for six of the FCRs released. DLTs are the business processes that instruct the mainframe how to manage system data. His expertise updating, modifying, and replacing existing system logic, allowed for the smooth implementation of each change request, including awards, unit accountability, and retirement pay systems. James Weston's leadership and skill resulted in 0 system failures, when all 39 change requests were released to production and increased the combat readiness of over 220,000 Marines across the entire service.

Additionally, due to resource shortfalls, James Weston took charge assigned himself as project officer for one SCR, researching 8 DLTs, and leading 3 planning sessions with 5 functional sponsors to clarify and identify 6 new requirements. Leveraging system aptitude and experience, he created a new reporting transaction sequence within the mainframe managing the Marine Corps' pay and personnel systems impacting retire and retain statuses of active duty service members. It significantly reduced manual intervention required to modify service members' administrative record selected for retire and retain. This new process makes certain a Marine approved for retire or retain is not erroneously separated, and does not experience interruptions with healthcare benefits.

James Weston is deserving of recognition by the Greater Kansas City Federal Executive Board Military Support for his professionalism and expertise in his field. He is a mentor, constantly offering his extensive knowledge and experience to coworkers and senior staff. James Weston's knowledge, professionalism, and determination are substantial assets to the Systems Modifications Branch, the Manpower Information Systems Support Activity, and the United States Marine Corps.

**UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC SAFETY AWARD**



***Joshua D. Johnson***  
***Assistant Field Office Director***  
***U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services***  
***Enforcement And Removal Operations***  
***United States Federal Government***

Joshua Johnson has served as an Assistant Field Office Director for the Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) Chicago Field Office since September 2020. In this capacity, Mr. Johnson oversees the daily operations of ERO employees assigned to three resident offices in Kansas City, MO, Wichita, KS, and Garden City, KS.

Mr. Johnson began his federal civil service in 2002 with the Transportation Security Administration as a Transportation Security Officer. In 2008, he joined Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Detention and Removal Operations (DRO) as an Immigration Enforcement Agent in the Dallas Field Office, Oklahoma City, OK Resident Office.

In Oklahoma City, Mr. Johnson assisted in developing the Oklahoma Department of Corrections Rapid Repatriation Program and was responsible for removing over 200 foreign born aliens. As a Deportation Officer in 2012, he became well-rounded while working in multitude of programs to include Fugitive Operations, Detained Case Management, Non-Detained Case Management, Alternatives to Detention, and the Removal Coordination Unit.

In 2017, Mr. Johnson was promoted to Supervisory Detention and Deportation Officer (SDDO) in the Dallas Field Office at the Prairieland Detention Center (PDC), a 652-bed facility in Alvarado, TX, with additional oversight of the Johnson County Jail, a 288-bed facility in Cleburne, TX. Mr. Johnson created the first PDC Intelligence Unit that screened new arrivals for gang affiliations and referred leads generated to Fugitive Operations. He oversaw the Detention Standard Compliance Unit (DSCU) for the Dallas Field Office which encompassed eight detention facilities and worked closely with ICE Health Service Corps, Detention Standards Compliance Officer, and external stakeholders to address any deficiencies. In the Summer of 2019, he assisted in the opening of two additional contract detention facilities totaling 1,600 beds throughout the Dallas Field Office in response to the migration crisis at the border. Mr. Johnson was also the Dallas Field Office PREA PSAC, Parental Interests POC, ERO LGBTI Field Liaison, Supervisory Supporting Disability Access Coordinator, OPR/AIU Fact Finder and Victim Witness Coordinator.

Mr. Johnson served honorably in the United States Marine Corps from 1997 – 2002. Mr. Johnson is actively working towards completion of his bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice.

**UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT  
DISTINGUISHED TEAM AWARD**

## **Region 7 Joint COVID-19 Outreach Team**



On Wednesday, May 5th, 2021, U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Marcia Fudge and U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra announced a nationwide, joint-agency effort to increase access to COVID- 19 prevention and treatment services, including testing and vaccines, to disproportionately affected communities. This specifically focused on federally-assisted households and people experiencing homelessness.

To answer that call to action, HUD, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and other key HHS operating divisions in Region 7, joined forces. They leveraged HUD's knowledge about where assisted housing was concentrated within underserved communities, HHS access to critical COVID-19 data, and HRSA's network of health centers in proximity to those targeted communities to coordinate and implement a comprehensive COVID-19 outreach, testing, and vaccine strategy in order to deliver COVID-19 information and health services to those most in need. The approach was strategic and efficient, and it allowed for more people to be helped through the agencies' merging of resources and capacity.

Between May and December 2021, HRSA's health centers reported delivering over 970 vaccinations in underserved communities in the Kansas City area alone. For each vaccination tendered, survey data by the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) found that households avoided close to \$20,000 on average in hospital charges related to COVID treatment, translating into over \$19 million estimated in foregone household medical debt. It also means that a loved one came home to their family and friends rather than being confined within an isolated hospital room.

In the end, it was the simplicity of knowing the communities that our agencies and local partners serve, appropriately leveraging the human and financial capital available to respond to challenges when a disaster strikes, not afterward, that made the case for the joint HUD and HHS Region 7 team for this Public Employee Recognition Day (PERD) Team award.



## UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT DISTINGUISHED TECHNICAL AWARD



**Megan Farrell**  
***Program Analyst***  
***Federal Emergency Management Agency***  
***United States Federal Government***

Megan Farrell's background is in political science research, which brought her to FEMA as a program analyst assigned to the Data Analytics Team. Megan was deployed to the Region's Covid-19 disaster for seven months, with her contributions in data-driven analyses, mapping, and reporting making an invaluable impact on COVID-19 response efforts and the vaccination campaign in Region 7 and nationally. She collaborated not only with FEMA, but HHS, HUD and the CDC on scoping and understanding urgent, everchanging data questions in order to author dynamic reports throughout the response.

Throughout her deployment, Megan was asked to keep up with the constantly changing information demands of healthcare and emergency response decision-makers and the evolving data resources that were available during the response. She quickly became a subject matter expert on the new data hubs for the national hospital surveillance reporting and national vaccination supply chain distribution and administration efforts, wrangling those data into analyses that could guide operational decision-making and prioritize resources and communication to partner in hospitals, state, local and tribal territorial agencies, and community-based organizations.

One area of focus for Regional leadership was equitable vaccine distribution. Megan developed an innovative vaccine equity index and report for the Region, later picked up nationally, which intuitively highlighted counties that could benefit from increased resources. Other data-driven efforts included analyses and recommendations around testing, hospital capacity, and vaccine throughput and administration.

Overall, data-informed decision-making was critical for how emergency managers, healthcare agencies, and healthcare professionals interpreted and effectively responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. Megan played an influential, impactful, and vital role in the data-informed COVID-19 response in the Region 7 states and beyond.

## UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT DISTINGUISHED TRADE/CRAFT AWARD

### **Kansas City Veteran's Medical Center's Electrical Department**



The KCVA Electrical Department is one of the most diverse and capable sections within our Facilities Management Service (FMS) at the Kansas City Medical Center in both personnel and assigned equipment. Their resiliency and teamwork was put on display during a recent electrical outage crisis and was an amazing feat to witness.

A fire occurred in building 40 (electrical power hub) located at the Kansas City Veterans Affairs Medical Center in the early hours of November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Our dayshift electricians arrived to find KC Fire Department personnel exiting the building with PPE and tools. FMS's personnel immediately implemented their emergency power outage plan, first, notifying Evergy Energy Company of the situation and then continuing to assist the fire department with isolating power to render safe. Once the building was deemed clear, the KCVA Electricians quickly entered the building to continue to assess damage.

It was soon discovered that the North-East electrical feed was lost, and all power was now being fed from the Leeds area feed. After, verifying all of our emergency power equipment was on and operating as intended, the hospital was now operating on our seven (7) back-up generators. Next, after ensuring all critical areas of the hospital were operational, they immediately started working with emergency management to notify FEMA and request additional support.

As a result, our Electrical Department personnel schedules were quickly adjusted to cover 24-hour operations. The staff worked around the clock until all of switchgears in building 40 was cleaned, repaired, and new feeder lines was installed to take the place of North-East feed. The entire hospital operated under emergency power during the entire duration which lasted four (4) days. On November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 everything was clean, replaced, and re-energized. We were able to put the hospital campus back on commercial power within a record-breaking timeframe.

During this emergency event, all members of this team showed why they are professionals in their craft and why they are held in such high regard by staff across the entire facility.

## 2022 Nominations

*The Federal Executive Board, on behalf of the 2022 Public Employees Recognition Day Committee, would like to recognize everyone nominated this year. We salute you for a job well done. Keep up the great work.*

### United States Government Employees

#### ***Administrative/Professional***

**Sheila Bridges**, Federal Aviation Administration

**Renee Lindsey**, Kansas City VA Medical Center

**Lynn Martin**, Federal Aviation Administration

#### ***Clerical***

**Shelby Vermillion**, Kansas City VA Medical Center

#### ***Community Service***

**Terry James**, Kansas City VA Medical Center

#### ***Diversity***

**Aimeee Agee and Tham Vo**, USCIS-National Records Center

#### ***Leadership***

**Jason Knipp**, Federal Aviation Administration

**Jamie Miller**, Kansas City VA Medical Center

**Michael Pokorny**, USCIS-National Records Center

#### ***Lifetime Achievement***

**Roderick Farmer**, Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency

#### ***Military/ Military Support***

**Ephie Driver**, Manpower Information Systems Support Activity (MISSA)

**David Gilbert**, Manpower Information Systems Support Activity (MISSA)

**CAPT Bruce Leuthold**, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Kansas City District

#### ***Public Safety***

**Kenneth Rose**, Federal Protective Service, Region 6

#### ***Team***

**Financial Management Branch**

Federal Protective Service, Region 6

**KCVA Vaccination Team**

Kansas City VA Medical Center

**Social Security Administration Automation Support and Computer Operating Team**

Kansas City Region, Social Security Administration

**Social Security Administration Public Affairs Team: People Facing Campaign**

**St. Louis Community Vaccination Center Team**

Federal Emergency Management Agency

# **2022 PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RECOGNITION DAY SPECIAL THANKS**

## **PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RECOGNITION DAY COMMITTEE**

**LINDA KERR-DAVIS**

*Regional Administrator, Social Security Administration- Region VII  
Chair, Public Employees Recognition Day Awards Ceremony*

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*Cookingham-Noll Fellow, City of Kansas City, Missouri*

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*Director of Human Resources, Jackson County, Missouri*

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**LARRY HISLE**

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## **FEDERAL NOMINATION REVIEW COMMITTEE**

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**JAMIE HABERSET**, General Services Administration

**ANGELA MONROE**, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services, National Benefits Center

**ERIK PATTERSON**, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

**KERRI ROBINSON**, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services, National Benefits Center

**SERRI WARD**, Department of Agriculture

**AMBER WOLFINGTON**, Federal Bureau of Prisons.

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*Federal Executive Board Chairperson*

**QUINTON LUCAS**

*Mayor Kansas City, MO*

**FRANK WHITE, JR.**

*Jackson County Executive*

## **SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

*Printing the Programs & Certificates*

**JACKSON COUNTY OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS**

*Angie Jeffries, Tara Pollard, Jeff Stead & Mary Koenig  
Program Cover & Certificate Design & Photography*

**GREATER KANSAS CITY FEDERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD**